Montana Crop & Livestock Reporter

survey results summary issued twice monthly by the

USDA, NASS, Montana Field Office

Issue: 06-10 Released: May 24, 2006

HIGHLIGHTS:

April 2006 Red Meat Production

Montana slaughter plants produced 1.2 million pounds, dressed weight, of red meat during April 2006, down 7 percent from April 2005 and down 5 percent from March 2006. Cattle slaughter totaled 1,400 head, 100 head below one year ago. The average live weight, at 1,147 pounds, decreased 9 pounds from last year.

During April there were 1,100 hogs slaughtered, up 100 head from a year ago. The average live weight, at 252 pounds, was down 12 pounds from last year. April sheep slaughter in the State totaled 200 head, unchanged from April 2005. The average live weight decreased 3 pounds to 120 pounds.

Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 3.61 billion pounds in April, down slightly from the 3.62 billion pounds produced in April 2005.

Beef production, at 1.97 billion pounds, was 5 percent above the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.61 million head, up 2 percent from April 2005. The average live weight was up 28 pounds from the previous year, at 1,246 pounds.

Veal production totaled 10.9 million pounds, 16 percent below April a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 47,500 head, down 23 percent from April 2005. The average live weight was 26 pounds above last year, at 379 pounds.

Pork production totaled 1.61 billion pounds, down 5 percent from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 7.96 million head, 6 percent below April 2005. The average live weight was 1 pound above the previous year, at 272 pounds.

Lamb and mutton production, at 17.0 million pounds, was up 9 percent from April 2005. Sheep slaughter totaled 248,500 head, 13 percent above last year. The average live weight was 136 pounds, down 5 pounds from April a year ago.

January to April 2006 commercial red meat production was 15.1 billion pounds, up 4 percent from 2005. Accumulated beef production was up 6 percent from last year, veal was down 6 percent, pork was up 1 percent from last year, and lamb and mutton production was up 2 percent.

April U.S. Milk Production Up 3.7 Percent

Milk production in the 23 major States during April totaled 14.2 billion pounds, up 3.7 percent from April 2005. March revised production, at 14.6 billion pounds, was up 5.6 percent from March 2005. The March revision represented an increase of 25 million pounds or 0.2 percent from last month's preliminary production estimate.

Production per cow in the 23 major States averaged 1,727 pounds for April, 37 pounds above April 2005.

The number of milk cows on farms in the 23 major States was 8.24 million head, 124,000 head more than April 2005, and 13,000 head more than March 2006.

Cattle County Estimates Available

The January 1, 2006 county estimates for all cattle and calves, beef cows, and milk cows are available on our website at http://www.nass.usda.gov/mt. January 1, 2006 sheep county estimates and December 1, 2005 county estimates for hogs and pigs and district estimates for chickens will be available at a later date.

The USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Montana Field Office compiles the only annual county estimates for Montana. The county estimates are based on livestock surveys conducted at the end of 2005 and beginning of 2006. Questionnaires were sent to a sample of farmers and ranchers throughout Montana asking for information on the livestock inventories. About 8,200 questionnaires were tabulated and summarized. Thank you to all the farmers and ranchers who participated in the survey!

U.S. Cattle on Feed Up 9 Percent

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.6 million head on May 1, 2006. The inventory was 9 percent above May 1, 2005 and 11 percent above May 1, 2004. This is the highest May 1 inventory since the series began in 1996.

Placements in feedlots during April totaled 1.63 million, 2 percent below 2005 but 2 percent above 2004. Net placements were 1.54 million. During April, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 385,000, 600-699 pounds were 270,000, 700-799 pounds were 444,000, and 800 pounds and greater were 530,000.

(Continued on next page)

Cattle on Feed (continued)

Marketings of fed cattle during April totaled 1.79 million, down slightly from 2005 and 5 percent below 2004. This is the lowest fed cattle marketings for the month of April since the series began in 1996.

Other disappearance totaled 87,000 during April, 4 percent below 2005 and 10 percent below 2004.

Oats 2005 Agricultural Chemical Use

Montana producers applied 2.0 million pounds of nitrogen fertilizer to 53 percent of the 90,000 acres planted to oats for the 2005 crop. Of the planted acres, 35 percent received a total of 1.0 million pounds of phosphate fertilizer, while 14 percent received a total of 0.4 million pounds of potash, and 9 percent received a total of 0.1 million pounds of sulfur.

Montana producers applied a total of 18,000 pounds of herbicides to 34 percent of the 2005 oats acres. The top three herbicides applied were as follows: 6,000 pounds of Glyphosate iso. salt to 12 percent of the acres; 5,000 pounds of 2,4-D, dimeth. salt to 11 percent of the acres; and 3,000 pounds of 2,4-D, 2-EHE to 10 percent of the acres

In addition to fertilizers and herbicides, Montana producers were surveyed regarding prevention practices, avoidance practices, monitoring practices, and suppression practices. The results are too numerous to mention here. However, a copy of the report can be obtained from our office at 1-800-835-2612.

Nationally, fifteen states were included in the 2005 survey: California, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin. Nitrogen recorded 107.4 million pounds applied to 56 percent of the oats acreage in these States. Approximately 50 million pounds each of Phosphate and Potash were applied to 40 and 28 percent, respectively, of the oats acreage in the States surveyed. For the first time, sulfur usage data were collected and 3.2 million pounds were applied to 9 percent of the acres planted.

Herbicides were applied to 31 percent of the oat acreage in 2005 with 2,4-D dimeth. salt being the most widely applied herbicide on 9 percent of the planted acreage for a total of 147 thousand pounds. Five percent of the planted acreage received Glyphosate iso. salt (formerly recorded as Glyphosate) and 2,4-D, 2-EHE (formerly recorded as Acetic Acid), at the rate of 117 and 79 thousand pounds, respectively.

Lambda-cyhalothrin was the only insecticide with enough reports to publish usage data. It was applied to less than one half of one percent of the 2005 oats planted acreage.

U.S. May Potato Stocks

Montana potato stocks were not published for May 2006.

The 13 major potato States held 73.0 million cwt of potatoes in storage May 1, 2006, down 17 percent from last year and 14 percent below May 1, 2004, for comparable States. Ohio and Pennsylvania were dropped from the potato stocks program starting with the 2005 storage season. Potatoes in storage account for 20 percent of the 2005 fall storage States' production, down 2 percentage points from last year.

Disappearance of 300 million cwt from the start of harvest to May 1, is down 4 percent from last year for comparable States. Shrink and loss, at 23.2 million cwt, is down 21 percent from last year for comparable States.

Processors have used 150 million cwt of 2005 crop potatoes so far this season, down 2 percent from a year ago and 3 percent below 2 years ago. Idaho and Malheur County, Oregon, total processing decreased 2 percent from a year ago and Washington and the rest of Oregon total processing dropped 3 percent from last season. Dehydrating usage accounts for 30.8 million cwt of the total processing, down 8 percent from last year and 11 percent below the same date in 2004.

Comparisons for individual States are as follows. Idaho's potato stocks are down 22 percent from last year, while Maine's sheds held 8 percent less than last year, and Colorado's stocks dropped 28 percent from last season. Stocks in Wisconsin decreased 3 percent from 2005. North Dakota's potato stocks dropped 61 percent from last year, while Minnesota's stocks are 47 percent below last year, and California's potato sheds held 20 percent less than in 2005. Montana, Nebraska, and New York's potato stocks combined decreased 18 percent from last year. Michigan potato stocks are unchanged from the same date in 2005. Washington and Oregon are the only States where potato stocks have increased from the same date in 2005, with stocks up 10 percent and 28 percent, respectively.

Hired Workers Down 4 Percent, Wage Rates Up 5 Percent From a Year Ago

There were 956,000 hired workers on the Nation’s farms and ranches during the week of April 9-15, 2006, down 4 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 718,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 238,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of $9.79 per hour during the April 2006 reference week, up 44 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of $8.96 per hour, up 40 cents from last April, while livestock workers earned $9.30 per hour compared with $9.14 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at $9.07 per hour, was up 35 cents from last year.
(continued on next page)

Hired Workers Down 4 Percent, Wage Rates Up 5 Percent From a Year Ago (continued)

The number of hours worked averaged 40.8 hours for hired workers during the survey week, up 2 percent from a year ago.

The largest decreases in the number of hired farm workers from last year occurred in California and in the Southeast (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina) and Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia) regions. In California, eight consecutive weeks of rain and unseasonably cool weather caused major delays in fieldwork across the northern two-thirds of the State. These factors, along with the ongoing worker shortages due to the continued tight security at the Mexican border and the controversy over immigration, have combined to keep the number of hired workers much lower than last year. Persistent dryness over the Southeast region has kept soil moisture levels inadequate for field preparation and planting, reducing the need for field workers. Pasture growth in the region has been severely curtailed by the lack of rain, delaying movement of cattle to grazing and decreasing the demand for livestock workers. In the Appalachian II region, late thunderstorms just prior to the reference week left soils too wet to work and caused delays in field activity. Therefore, fewer hired workers were needed.

The largest increases in the number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia), and Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio) regions, and in Florida. In the Delta region, a return to more normal weather patterns compared to last year's cool, wet reference week caused hired worker numbers to be higher. Continued dry conditions in the Appalachian I region kept pastures from greening up, necessitating more supplemental feeding and heightening the demand for livestock workers. In the Corn Belt I region, cold, damp weather just prior to the reference week had put many field activities on hold. Considerably warmer, drier conditions during the reference week allowed fieldwork to gain momentum, increasing the need for hired workers. Strong demand from the nursery and greenhouse industries in Florida caused more field workers to be required.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), Northeast I (New England and New York), Corn Belt I and Mountain I (Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming) regions. In the Northeast I and II regions, the higher wages were due to a larger than normal percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers in the work force. The higher wages in the Corn Belt I region were due to a lower proportion of part time workers in the work force, strong demand from the nursery and greenhouse industries, and the increasing need for highly skilled machine operators on grain farms. In the Mountain I region, the higher wages were due to more salaried workers putting in fewer hours and a high percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers.

Wage Rates for Hired Workers, by Region & U.S., April 10-16, 2005 & April 9-15, 2006 1/

U.S. and Region 2/	TYPE OF WORKER						Wage Rates for All Hired Workers	
	Field		Livestock		Field & Livestock			
	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
	Dollars per Hour							
Northeast I	9.01	9.71	8.51	9.54	8.83	9.65	9.47	10.49
Northeast II	9.24	10.54	8.62	8.80	9.05	10.10	9.65	10.75
Appalachian I	8.38	8.84	8.85	8.34	8.50	8.70	9.07	9.48
Appalachian II	8.38	8.20	7.69	7.75	8.08	8.00	8.59	8.85
Southeast	8.41	8.49	8.30	8.68	8.38	8.55	8.83	9.19
FL	8.20	8.37	9.90	8.50	8.37	8.39	9.31	9.19
Lake	8.99	9.32	10.05	9.94	9.45	9.63	9.95	10.30
Cornbelt I	8.84	10.18	9.17	9.52	8.91	10.00	9.51	10.49
Cornbelt II	8.85	8.45	9.27	10.38	9.06	9.46	9.38	10.12
Delta	7.37	7.64	7.18	8.15	7.34	7.75	7.64	8.00
Northern Plains	9.33	9.67	9.69	8.64	9.46	9.25	9.70	9.84
Southern Plains	8.13	8.24	9.15	9.06	8.53	8.64	9.28	9.37
Mountain I	7.89	9.20	8.49	8.57	8.23	8.81	8.43	9.22
Mountain II	7.70	8.39	8.41	8.98	8.02	8.65	8.50	9.08
Mountain III	7.95	8.14	9.40	9.13	8.51	8.60	9.18	9.17
Pacific	8.87	9.24	10.78	10.13	9.23	9.45	9.95	10.10
CA	8.62	8.95	9.60	10.85	8.76	9.22	9.48	10.19
HI 3/	9.67	9.79			9.79	9.93	11.33	11.96
US 4/	8.56	8.96	9.14	9.30	8.72	9.07	9.35	9.79

1/ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers. 2/ Regions consist of the following Northeast I: CT, ME, MA, NH, NY, RI, VT. Northeast II: DE, MD, NJ, PA. Appalachian I: NC, VA. Appalachian II: KY, TN, WV. Southeast: AL, GA, SC. Lake MI, MN, WI. Cornbelt I: IL, IN, OH. Cornbelt II: IA, MO. Delta: AR, LA, MS. Northern Plains: KS, NE, ND, SD. Southern Plains: OK, TX. Mountain I: ID, MT, WY. Mountain II: CO, NV, UT. Mountain III: AZ, NM. Pacific: OR, WA. 3/ Insufficient data for livestock. 4/ Excludes AK.

U.S. April Egg Production Up 2 Percent

U.S. egg production totaled 7.54 billion during April 2006, up 2 percent from last year. Production included 6.48 billion table eggs, and 1.07 billion hatching eggs, of which 998 million were broiler-type and 68 million were egg-type. The number of layers during April 2006 averaged 348 million, up 1 percent from last year. April egg production per 100 layers was 2,164 eggs, up slightly from April 2005.

All layers in the U.S. on May 1, 2006, totaled 347 million, up 1 percent from last year. The 347 million layers consisted of 289 million layers producing table-type eggs, 55.3 million layers producing broiler-type hatching eggs, and 2.86 million layers producing egg-type hatching eggs. Rate of lay per day on May 1, 2006, averaged 71.5 eggs per 100 layers, down slightly from May 1, 2005.

Egg-type chicks hatched during April 2006 totaled 34.6 million, down 9 percent from April 2005. Eggs in incubators totaled 37.0 million on May 1, 2006, down 1 percent from a year ago.

Domestic placements of egg-type pullet chicks for future hatchery supply flocks by leading breeders totaled 255,000 during April 2006, down 17 percent from April 2005.

Broiler-type chicks hatched during April 2006 totaled 787 million, down 1 percent from April 2005. Eggs in incubators totaled 658 million on May 1, 2006, down 1 percent from a year earlier.

Leading breeders placed 6.59 million broiler-type pullet chicks for future domestic hatchery supply flocks during April 2006, down 3 percent from April 2005.

COMING IN NEXT REPORTER

Barley Ciounty Estimates
Ag Prices Received
Winter Wheat Production
Wheat Supply and Demand

Peggy Stringer, Director
John Hilton, Deputy Director
Wendy Bruski, Statistical Info Assistant
10 W. 15th Street, Suite 3100, Helena, Montana 59626
406-441-1240 or 1-800-835-2612
www.nass.usda.gov/mt/ nass-mt@nass.usda.gov